



California Department of Education
Executive Office
SBE-003 (REV. 11/2017)

California State Board of Education

July 2019 Agenda

Item #04

Subject

State Seal of Civic Engagement Recommended Criteria: Initial Review and Feedback

Type of Action

Action, Information

Summary of the Issue(s)

California *Education Code (EC)* Section 51471 directs the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) to recommend to the State Board of Education (SBE) criteria for awarding a State Seal of Civic Engagement (SSCE). The statute requires that the SSCE be awarded to students who have demonstrated excellence in civic education and participation, and have demonstrated an understanding of the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, and the democratic system of government.

Recommendation

The California Department of Education (CDE) recommends that the SBE provide feedback on the SSCE recommended criteria.

Brief History of Key Issues

Assembly Bill 24, Chapter 604, Statutes of 2017, added sections 51470–51474 to the *EC*, which directs the SSPI to develop, and the SBE to adopt, a set of criteria for awarding the SSCE. The statute requires the SSPI to recommend the criteria to the SBE by January 1, 2020, and that the SBE take final action on the criteria by January 31, 2021.

More information regarding AB 24 is available on the California Legislative Information web page at http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB24.

Statute requires the SSPI to consult with a diverse group of credentialed, current, classroom teachers who teach the subject of history–social science (HSS), including

government, in secondary schools. The statute directs the SSPI, in developing the criteria, to consider making the opportunity to earn the SSCE accessible to all students. The SSCE should recognize pupil excellence or achievement, confer some benefit beyond secondary school, and not be based on achievement that is already recognized in another form.

Information regarding the development of the SSCE is available on the CDE SSCE Schedule of Significant Events web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/hs/hssschedsigevents.asp>. The CDE solicited applications and identified 14 high school teachers to participate in a SSCE Advisory Group (AG) in September 2018. On November 15, 2018, the CDE held a SSCEAG video-conference meeting to solicit their input on the SSCE criteria. More information regarding the SSCEAG members is available on the CDE State Seal of Civic Engagement Advisory Group web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/hs/ssceadvisory.asp>.

The SSCEAG member feedback formed the basis for the initial draft criteria. Select CDE staff provided feedback on the draft criteria to ensure that specific student groups, including, but not limited to, students in special education programs, foster youth, students who are homeless, and migrant students, would be able to earn the SSCE. The CDE also conducted a meeting with representatives from the Power of Democracy Committee; the California HSS Project; the Constitutional Rights Foundation; the Los Angeles County Office of Education; the Promoting Authentic College, Career, and Civic Readiness Assessment Systems Committee; and the California Civic Engagement Project to collect additional feedback on the draft criteria.

The draft SSCE criteria were made available online for public comment, from March 6, 2019, through March 26, 2019. The public was notified of the public comment period via direct emails to previously interested parties, the California Council for the Social Studies Board, the CDE HSS listserv, and CDE social media accounts. Stakeholders gave comments via a Snap Survey to provide feedback on each of the five draft criteria. Commenters also provided suggestions regarding implementation of the criteria.

The SSCE criteria, provided as Attachment 1, were revised based on feedback and suggestions offered through the public comment process.

Summary of Previous State Board of Education Discussion and Action

Not applicable.

Fiscal Analysis

The CDE estimates that the development of a casting for the SSCE foil press to produce the seals to affix to diplomas or transcripts will cost approximately \$3,200, and

CDE staff will need to affix the seals on an ongoing basis. Local educational agencies (LEAs) are not required to implement a process to award the SSCE. Therefore, the adoption of the SSCE criteria has no fiscal impact on LEAs.

Attachment(s)

- Attachment 1: State Seal of Civic Engagement Recommended Criteria
(10 Pages)

Attachment 1: State Seal of Civic Engagement Recommended Criteria

State Seal of Civic Engagement Goal

California Department of Education, April 2019

Local educational agencies (LEAs) support and are inclusive of ALL students developing civic competencies and identities while learning about civic responsibilities by providing high quality opportunities for student voice, civic engagement, and participation in civic life at their schools, communities, and all levels of government. Research shows that (1) poor and minority students are receiving significantly fewer and inferior civic education opportunities than middle-class and wealthy white students, (2) people living in areas of concentrated poverty are significantly less likely to be engaged civically, and have fewer opportunities for civic engagement than those living in more mixed or affluent communities (Kahne, Joseph, and Ellen Middaugh. 2008. "Democracy for Some: The Civic Opportunity Gap in High School." February 2008), and (3) the more often a young person is civically engaged, the more likely they are to be civically engaged throughout their life (Kahne, Joseph, and Susan E. Spote. 2008. "Developing Citizens: the Impact of Civic Learning Opportunities on Students' Commitment to Civic Participation." September 2008.)

Throughout their History–Social Science (HSS) educational experience, students are given opportunities to learn about the governance structures they operate in (such as political process, power in democracy, current and controversial issues, civic leaders and candidates, etc). Other content areas may inform students about issues they care about and/or that impact their communities, all the while appreciating multiple viewpoints and working with the institutions of power to serve the common good.

Some students may engage in and demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions at the elementary level, others may begin at middle school, and still others may start at the high school level. School districts may consider collaborating with their feeder elementary and middle schools and English Language Development specialists as they develop local criteria, interim award opportunities, and applicable on-ramps for the State Seal of Civic Engagement (SSCE). LEAs that enable early and ongoing opportunities for all students to gain civic knowledge, practice and apply civic skills, develop digital citizenship skills, realize civic responsibilities, and cultivate relationships with their communities will help to prepare civically aware, skilled, and engaged citizens.

Throughout the process, students are encouraged to consider interdisciplinary projects and issues, using all the knowledge and skills they have gained across the curriculum to engage with their communities.

Recommended Criteria

The student must:

1. Be in good academic standing and on track to satisfy requirements to earn a high school diploma;
2. Demonstrate a “competent understanding” of United States (U.S.) and California constitutions; functions and governance of local governments; tribal government structures and organizations; and democratic principles, concepts, and processes;
3. Participate in an informed civic engagement project to address real world problems;
4. Present a written or oral reflection of student civic engagement project activities; and
5. Exhibit character traits that support civic-mindedness, supported by a letter of recommendation from a peer, educator, mentor, local elected official, or non-familial community member.

State Seal of Civic Engagement Implementation Guidance

The following guidance for each criterion offers ideas and considerations to structure local SSCE requirements. Each LEA can determine how to implement the criteria in its own local context. Local school district boards are encouraged to approve or adopt their own policies regarding implementation of the SSCE criteria.

Criteria 1:

Be in good academic standing and on track to satisfy requirements to earn a high school diploma.

Districts may use their own definition of in “good standing” for a student to graduate or grade promote, such as:

- Being on track to graduate—using district or state requirements
- Demonstrating academic improvement for all youth (challenges faced by students who are English Learners [EL], homeless, in foster care, and/or incarcerated should be considered)
- Building constructive relationship(s) with the school community, (e.g., prosocial behaviors)

LEAs may also consider using student Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to specify levels needed to attain “good standing.”

Criteria 2:

Demonstrate a “competent understanding” of U.S. and California constitutions; functions and governance of local governments; tribal government structures and organizations; and democratic principles, concepts, and processes.

Students must complete grade level HSS course requirements in U.S. history and American Government with a passing grade. LEAs may determine, through local board of education policy, their local definitions of a passing grade. LEAs may choose to measure fulfillment of HSS course requirements with a district-specific content benchmark or civic assessment. LEA encouragement of student participation in local governmental meetings may also be considered. LEAs may also consider encouraging grade 11 student fulfillment of the criteria in order for a seal to be affixed to a transcript for use in post-secondary college applications.

Criteria 3:

Participate in an informed civic engagement project to address real world problems.

Participation in informed civic engagement activities may take many forms. In order to promote student use of inquiry, educators are encouraged to use the Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning document, which is available on the Education Commission of the States web page at <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/10/48/11048.pdf>. This document can help educators support students as they build civic skills during class and on the school campus as a whole. In addition, to support students as they gain civic skills, educators may want to consider several complementary streams of practice such as digital media literacy education, social-emotional learning, and school climate reform, as noted in *The Republic is [Still] at Risk—and Civics is Part of the Solution* document, which is available on the CivXNow web page at <https://civxnow.org/static/media/SummitWhitePaper.fc2a3bb5.pdf>. Both of these documents provide information to support students' civic knowledge and skill development as they endeavor to earn the SSCE.

Additional information on civic engagement activities can be found in the *Revitalizing K–12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint for Action* document, which is available on the CDE Civics, Government, and Service Learning Resources web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/cltfinalreport.pdf>. Students are encouraged to pursue projects that relate to issues that matter to them and their communities and that incorporate social action and policy change that could range from local to global. The student exemplars in the chart beginning on page 7 may look different in different LEA contexts. Table 1 is provided to demonstrate a range of options that could satisfy

Criteria #3. The exemplars provided are not definitive but considered a starting point for local decision making. The goal is for all students to have opportunities for experiential learning to advance democratic ideals.

Volunteering may be an aspect of a civic engagement project; however, volunteering alone does not constitute a project to address a real world problem.

Additional K–12 instructional resources are available in Table 2.

Criteria 4:

Present a written or oral reflection of student civic engagement project activities.

Not only do the abilities to analyze and critique their own work, collaborate, take action, and self-reflect help fulfill the SSCE criteria, but they also ensure that an eligible student candidate for the SSCE is College, Career, and Civic ready.

Through self-reflection, the student will demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Student self-reflection could show:

- How the student engaged with institutions of power to advance a common good (for the student's community and/or society as a whole) or a democratic ideal, such as equity and justice;
- What the student learned and how the student has personally grown through the civic engagement activity.

Self-reflection may be exhibited in written or oral form and may include the project's impact on the student's learning and growth in civic skills. This may include working with others, the effectiveness of the action taken for the community the student endeavored to serve, and ideas for further or future work. Some examples include:

- A capstone project or portfolio with self-reflection on project activities, including successes and challenges;
- A public presentation regarding information on roadblocks, or issues that happened within the civic engagement activity;
- A public presentation such as (but not limited to) a video, slide show, speech, digital presentation, photo exhibit, podcast, social media use, or scheduled meeting with a policy maker;
- A written essay explaining why an activity was chosen; what activities were undertaken; what was learned; what civic skills, competencies, and knowledge were gained; how the efforts impacted the community; and how the activity may inspire future civic engagement activities for the student or others.

The reflection or presentation should reflect a student's choice of civic engagement activities.

Criteria 5:

Exhibit character traits that support civic-mindedness, supported by a letter of recommendation from a peer, educator, mentor, local elected official, or non-familial community member.

1. Civic mindedness may encompass:
 - Demonstrating concern for both the rights and well-being of others;
 - Tolerating, appreciating, and seeking out a variety of perspectives;
 - Having a sense of civic duty at local, state, national, and global levels;
 - Being aware of the value of their experiences and their power to act, and being predisposed to take action to change things for the better.

2. Evidence of observed character traits that support civic-mindedness may include:
 - Standing up for another student who is experiencing bullying, harassment, or unwanted attention;
 - Valuing differences, speaking and engaging others with respect and civility, especially those who are different and/or have diverse or opposing views;
 - Leading a group to work toward providing a common good.

Additional information on civic values may be found in the *Revitalizing K–12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint for Action* document, which is available on the CDE Civic Education Initiatives web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/cltffinalreport.pdf>.

Students may submit letters from peers who hold an appointed or elected position in a school or civic related organization or from a coworker at a salary earning job or volunteer or paid internship.

Students may submit letters from adults who are educators, coworkers/supervisors, civic leaders, elected officials, mentors, or coaches.

Table 1: Examples of Civic Engagement Projects: Grades Nine Through Twelve

Description of Civic Learning Goal	Project Example
School support for nonpartisan engagement in all parts of the electoral process, including voter education, voter registration, and voter mobilization.	Students analyze voter turnout data for their community and formulate an outreach plan explaining to their peers why voting matters. Students can partner with a local civic institution to organize a voter registration drive at their school or in their community.
Students research different points of view online and learn to engage in respectful, informed, and productive online dialogue.	In class and teacher led, students practice effective discussion and deliberation techniques for controversial topics. Students select a subject of current controversy and analyze the coverage of the topic on two news sites with differing viewpoints. They check for or critique the accuracy and credibility of the information shared and of the corresponding site sources. They also conduct an audit of the online discourse readers had in response to the story, identify effective and ineffective comments and exchanges and then create a rubric with examples. After refining their tools, students create a “Better Online Conversation” campaign sharing their rubric publicly, and offer classes to community members during a school open house.

Description of Civic Learning Goal	Project Example
<p>Students engage in opportunities to voice their perspectives and share their feedback on current issues or policies, including social problems, to relevant and meaningful audiences.</p>	<p>Possible student opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gathering information, data, and feedback before presenting a plan for change before a decision making body, such as a school board, special district board, city council, or legislator. ● Displaying leadership by serving on an elected or appointed leadership position in an organization related to student government, school governance, or public policy for at least two full years. ● Organizing a town hall meeting, community protest, boycott/buycott, or parent education night. ● Writing a letter to the governing body of a local government in favor of or against an item of interest under consideration by the local government. ● Producing and circulating media (such as a video, infographic, photo exhibit, or online post) in order to raise the public's awareness about a critical civic or political issue.
<p>Students organize a new effort and recruit others to participate.</p>	<p>Students may start a new campaign on their school campus such as a recycling program, campus beautification effort, school garden, representation on school decision-making committees, or set up an organization or a fundraiser to support or address a social issue.</p>

Description of Civic Learning Goal	Project Example
<p>Students demonstrate an interest in politics and the political system.</p>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students may research state or local government issues or candidates and publish a voter’s guide. ● Students may write a series of editorials to a newspaper (online or print). ● Students evaluate a candidate’s platform once that candidate has been elected and share their findings with a relevant and meaningful audience. ● Students may research candidates’ statements in order to fact check their accuracy and validity and share the results with a relevant and meaningful audience. ● Students may develop, administer, disaggregate results, and present information from a survey instrument regarding a community issue. ● Students may work with an elected official or employee from a county, city, or special district, federal or state legislator, or policy maker to propose a new law.

Table 2: Select Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve Resources

Resource	Website URL
Teaching Tolerance — Classroom Civil Discourse	https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/toward-a-more-civil-discourse
National Geographic — Geo Inquiry Curriculum	https://www.nationalgeographic.org/education/programs/geo-inquiry/
Mikva — Soap Box Challenge	http://bit.ly/ProjectSoapbox
Constitutional Rights Foundations — Civic Action Project	http://www.crfcap.org/
Stanford History Education Group — Civic Online Reasoning	https://sheg.stanford.edu/civic-online-reasoning
Facing History and Ourselves — Preparing Students for Difficult Conversations	https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/facing-ferguson-news-literacy-digital-age/preparing-students-difficult (registration required)